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1901

Address at the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Town of Dana

BY
RICHARD H. DANA

1901

R. H.

ADDRESS AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN
OF DANA.

AUGUST 22, 1901.

Shakespeare makes Juliet say:—

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.”

Yet names, made of only a few common letters, have the magic quality of containing whole books full and whole human lives full of association, history, ideals, and inspirations for better or for worse. We all must have thought, for example, what a priceless treasure it is for the people of the United States to have for their national hero a man with such character for sound sense, perseverance, self-improvement, truth, unselfishness, uprightness, and nobility as Washington, and how wise it has been to keep his name and character in mind by calling the capital of the country and some city in every State and some chief street in every city after him; and, in contrast, how unfortunate it has been, for example, for the people of France to have for their national hero such an abnormal genius, so impossible to imitate, with such weaknesses in character so easy to copy, as Napoleon.

If there are such possibilities for good or bad in a name, let us see whence and why this town was named Dana. In a Worcester County history, published in 1879, it was said the town was named after Francis Dana, in recognition of his influence in securing the act of incorporation. This act, like all acts of incorporation, was obtained from the State legislature. At the date of the incorporation of this town, Francis Dana had not been a member of the State legislature or State council for over twenty years; moreover,

he had been sixteen years one of the judges of the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth, and was then, and had for ten years been, its Chief Justice.

Both by the Constitution of Massachusetts and by well-established etiquette, it would not have been permissible for a judge of this court, still less for its Chief Justice, to use his influence on or even appear before the legislature in this way. His name does not appear on the official papers preserved in this case at the State House, and yet it is not improbable that there is just a little foundation for the tradition. He may very likely have given unofficially, and as an act of kindness, some advice to the representatives of the small community then seeking a charter, but perhaps hardly able to afford to pay the fees of legislative counsel. Merely to have given some such small assistance would alone and of itself not be sufficient ground for calling this town Dana. It is not customary — indeed, it is never done, as far as I can learn — to christen a town after the attorney who has secured its charter.

Perhaps, then, it may not be inappropriate for me to say something of this Francis Dana after whom this town is named. It may not be uninteresting to the inhabitants and their friends and relatives gathered here to-day at the centennial celebration to know something more about him, and to see if there is not something in his character and achievements to have caused and to justify the adoption of this name beyond some small aid in securing its charter, — something to be proud of, to be worthy of remembering, to be fitting to follow, or to be an inspiration to the inhabitants and their descendants after them.

Francis Dana lived in stirring times, such as bring out the best that is in men and bring the best men out. He was born just before the middle of the century before last, in 1743, about the beginning of a French and English war on this continent, two years before the first romantic siege of Louisburg, and a few years before the first settlement in what is now Dana. He was fifteen years old at the second siege of Louisburg, and twenty at the close of another and

most decisive French and English war in America. The first conflict between the British troops and the Boston citizens, called "the Boston Massacre," found him twenty-seven years of age, at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War he was thirty-two, the Declaration of Independence was signed when he was thirty-three, the Revolution was ended when he was thirty-nine, and the Constitution of the United States was adopted when he was forty-five.

Thus he lived, as a boy and young man, through the wars with the French and Indians, and came of age at the beginning of that period of discussion, argument, and political and civil strife with the mother country which educated the people in the principles of self-government and the value of liberty, and prepared them for the Revolution; then, as a more mature man, through the long Revolution itself; then, as a middle-aged man, through the six years which the late John Fiske has called the "critical period of American history," which followed the successful issue of the war and came before the adoption of the Constitution,—a period of unrest, unstable government, excitement, and turmoil, of conflict between license and law, anarchy and order, in no wise better exemplified than by Shays's Rebellion, the chief camp of which was about half a mile south-west of Dana Common, where we are now gathered; then through the construction period that followed and came out of this, in which the Constitutions of the United States and of the separate States were adopted, when law and order became established, and from which a long period of peace, liberty, and prosperity ensued.

During the period of preparation for the struggle for independence, the time of civil strife between the colonies, chiefly Massachusetts and the mother country, Francis Dana took no inconsiderable part for one so young. This was one of the most important epochs in our history. Were it not for a full discussion and thorough understanding of our rights and liberties and the principles on which they were founded, the public would easily have been misled into accepting the plausible concession of details, with the reten-

tion of real power over us, that Great Britain offered; and the thirteen separate and weak colonies would never have become so united in thought and purpose as to have resisted the armed action of the then most powerful nation of the world. Not only was this period of discussion and education important in our own history, but in the history of every free people since. In no one of the free colonies of Great Britain to-day, neither in Canada, Australia, Cape Colony, nor New Zealand, does England for a moment try to enforce those obnoxious measures of restraints on trade, quartering troops on peaceful inhabitants, issuing search warrants, trials without jury, or taxation without representation, which were the causes for our complaint and resistance. In our own new possessions, too, if we do not grant full freedom and independence, yet we shall be forced, by the very principles which were established in those days before 1760 and 1775, to grant as large a share of self-government and to inflict as few restraints as is compatible with peace, order, and prosperity in those dependencies.

Francis Dana had special advantages and training for useful work in those days. His father, Richard Dana, was a leader among the "Sons of Liberty." He frequently presided at the famous town meetings held at Faneuil Hall and the Old South Meeting-house, and was often on committees with the Adamses, Otis, Quincy, Hancock, and Warren, preparing addresses to the patriots through the colonies and appeals to the king and Parliament on the other side of the ocean. He was a noted lawyer, sharing with Otis the acknowledged leadership of the Massachusetts bar, and was professionally consulted by town and State governments as to their rights and power. He in 1765 took the affidavit of Andrew Oliver, the stamp commissioner, not to enforce the stamp act; and, holding, as he did, a commission of trial justice from the crown, he subjected himself to the penalties of treason. This Richard Dana, father of Francis, died in 1772, just three years before the outbreak of hostilities, at the age of seventy-two. President Adams, in later days, speaks of him as one who, had he not been

cut off by death, would have furnished one of the immortal names of the Revolution.

Instructed and inspired by such a father, he had also the advantages, like that father, of a Harvard College education. For five years Francis Dana studied at the law in the office of his maternal uncle, Judge Edmund Trowbridge, a celebrated lawyer in the colonies, whom Chancellor Kent calls "the oracle of the old real law of Massachusetts." Francis came to the bar in 1767, just at the height of the civil struggle. Early he joined the "Sons of Liberty"; and John Adams's diary of 1766 speaks of the club in which "Lowell, Dana, Quincy, and other young fellows were not ill employed in lengthened discussions of the rights of taxation." He became an active practitioner at the bar, but especially in causes involving civil and political rights. The death of his father in 1772 left him in possession of a competent fortune, which he regarded as only increasing his opportunities for service in the public cause. In 1773 he married a daughter of the Hon. William Ellery, one of the leading Rhode Island patriots, and afterward a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Such were his training and associations, and for applying these to useful work he was not lacking in opportunity.

In 1773, in concert with John Adams, he acted in behalf of the Rhode Island patriots for the prosecution in the matter of Rome's and Moffatt's letters. In 1774 he, though one of the youngest members of the bar, opposed the complimentary address prepared for Governor Hutchinson on his leaving the country; and this he is said to have done with great courage and zeal.

In the spring of 1774, just a year before the battle of Lexington, it became important to send some one to England for the double purpose of representing the patriots among their friends in the mother country and of ascertaining the real state of feeling among political rulers on the other side. Dana, then scarcely thirty-one years of age, was chosen for this purpose. He took confidential letters to Dr. Franklin from Warren, the elder Quincy, Dr.

Cooper, and other leaders. Francis's brother, the Rev. Edmund Dana, had gone to England, settled there, and married the daughter of Lord Kinnaird, who was also niece of Governor Johnstone and of Sir William Poultney, one of the largest land-owners in the midland counties; and through them and their connections Francis Dana had special opportunities of ascertaining the state of English feeling and government policy. He became intimate with Dr. Price, and contributed materials for the work of that learned doctor, published in England in defence of the patriots' cause, — a storehouse of information much quoted and drawn from by our many friends of that time in that country. He remained in England thus occupied two years. Meanwhile in this country the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill had been fought. We were still in the attitude of dependent colonies resisting aggressions on our liberties. The question then agitating the minds of the leaders on this side was whether we should continue in the same attitude and still seek to adjust our differences with the old country as its colonies or whether we should declare absolute independence. These two years in England had convinced Mr. Dana that all hope of any such adjustment on any terms which the colonists could accept must be abandoned, and he threw his whole influence zealously in favor of independence. He returned in April, 1776, and impressed his conviction on those who had sent him over, on his father-in-law, the Hon. William Ellery, and on other members of the Continental Congress; and this opinion, formed in England with such peculiar advantages for forming one, had its influence in inducing the Continental Congress three months after his return to issue the great Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776. Mr. Dana soon after his return was himself chosen as a member of that Congress, but just too late for him to put his signature to that celebrated document. Besides being a member of Congress, he was for the next four years by successive elections a member of the Massachusetts Council.

The next important civil act in our history was the adop-

tion of the Articles of Confederation between the colonies. As a member of Congress, he took a part in this, and set his signature to the articles in July, 1778.

But before this civil act, military considerations of the gravest importance came before Congress. Early in 1778 the cause of the patriots was at a very low ebb. To recall these days, it is only necessary for me to mention to any American, with even a common-school education only, the name "Valley Forge." There, as you remember, the remains of our army had retired, not only defeated, but almost wholly demoralized. Many of the colonies had not only failed to furnish their quota of troops, but had failed to provision and equip those that were still in the field. The Continental Congress seemed helpless; and there were complaints, jealousies, and murmurings of distrust even of the great Washington. You will recollect how the Continental soldiers were often seen barefoot in the snow, were without adequate blankets or tents, were dressed almost in rags, and frequently had no proper or sufficient food. Unless the army was reorganized, enlarged, and suitably supplied, all the political education and wise statesmanship of those times would have been of no value. The Declaration of Independence would not have been worth the paper it was written on. These were days that tried the souls of men. It was no time then for merely conferring much-sought-after honors, but Congress had to look to its ablest leaders. Mr. Dana was one of its youngest members, being only thirty-four years of age; but by his eloquence, combined with good legal ability, business judgment, and high character, he had made a position for himself. He had given some study to military affairs both here and abroad, and on his return from England had contemplated going into the army. To him at this critical moment Congress turned, and made him Chairman of the Committee on the Army, and sent him to consult with Washington at Valley Forge. There he continued five months of this distressful season, engaged with Washington in concerting the plans submitted by Congress to the Commander-in-chief, July 4, 1778, "to be

proceeded in" (as the order says) "with the advice and assistance of Mr. Reed and Mr. Dana, or either of them."

From the date of this reorganization the army improved, and the fortunes of war not long after turned in our favor.

During this same year another vital matter came before Congress; and that was the consideration of the Conciliatory Bills, as they were called, of Lord North. The English government had sent over a peace commission, charged with the duty of urging the adoption of these measures. There were all this time many colonists with more or less well-defined Tory sympathies; but more potent and more to be feared were the many people who had got tired and discouraged by the long years of war which, up to that time, had in the main resulted in loss and defeat, and, added to this, the concessions proposed by Lord North were not inconsiderable, and must have been very alluring to many of the despondent and of the conservative business men and property holders. It required keen legal and political training and ability to deal adequately with these plausible proposals, and enable Congress and the people to thoroughly understand their true nature. Mr. Dana, then only thirty-five years of age, was appointed by Congress one of a special committee of three to consider the subject; and it was the strong report of this committee that caused the rejection of those conciliatory proposals in Congress by a unanimous vote.

Besides these military and civil problems at home, Congress had serious concerns abroad. France was at war with England, and had taken the part of the colonists. Fickle as was this friendship and disappointing as were the direct results of this assistance at many critical times, yet the indirect effect of France's hostility to England was of absolutely vital importance to our success. Had England been at peace with all European countries, and been free to concentrate all her immense force on regaining the thirteen colonies, the cause of our forefathers would have been indeed hopeless. At the same time it was thought that, if France continued with us, our recent successes on the field

of battle might bring Great Britain to the point of yielding. Therefore, some able and discreet persons had to be sent to Europe for the double purpose of securing the continued and active assistance of France and possibly of negotiating treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain. Mr. Dana was chosen as one of two, and was sent with Adams to Paris in 1779, as secretary of legation with special powers. They found no immediate prospect of negotiation with England. Meanwhile our government was sorely in need of the "sinews of war"; and money loans must be secured in Holland and from some of our English sympathizers. Again on Mr. Dana and Mr. Adams, as his senior, was put by Congress this important function.

Besides the friendship of France, Congress hoped to secure the co-operation of Russia, or, failing in that, at least to keep Russia in such a position of doubt that the uncertainty of her then future course might have its weight, with other factors, in turning the scales of English thought in favor of acknowledging our independence. This delicate mission was intrusted to Mr. Dana alone. He was appointed minister to Russia, and proceeded toward St. Petersburg. He went by way of Frankfort and Berlin, and arrived at the court of Empress Catherine in 1781. To have received Mr. Dana in full form as minister plenipotentiary from the United States would have been, in international law, equivalent to the recognition by Russia of the independence of the United States; and this would have been regarded by England as an act of war. Though not openly received in due form, yet Mr. Dana succeeded in having regular intercourse with Count Osterman, the Russian minister of foreign affairs, and in keeping his constant friendship. This, while not an open act at which England could take offence, was still known to her minister at St. Petersburg, and by him communicated to the ministry and Parliament. All this time Mr. Dana was in constant correspondence with Congress, with the Marquis de Verac, the French minister at St. Petersburg, with Mr. Robert P. Livingstone, whom Congress had appointed secretary of foreign affairs, and with Mr. Adams.

He succeeded thus in the main object of his mission to Russia, and stayed there till the preliminaries of peace between Great Britain and the United States were begun.

Within two months after his return to Boston, he was again appointed a delegate to the Continental Congress.

In those days there was no President of the United States. Congress was both the legislative and the executive. In the summer of 1784 Congress took a recess for several months, and, in order that the country should not be without a government, appointed an executive committee of one from each State to continue in session and clothed with very considerable powers. Mr. Dana was selected as the one member of this committee from Massachusetts.

Soon after this the power of the Continental Congress became very weak, while the States individually became more powerful. The organization of each State government, and the settlement of peace and order through the courts, seemed to be the chief public work for that "critical period." In 1785 Mr. Dana received an appointment to the Supreme Bench of Massachusetts. He decided it was his duty to accept it, and so he left his seat in Congress.

In the next two years it became apparent to the whole country that some more powerful national government than the loosely formed Continental Congress under the Articles of Confederation was required, and in 1787 a convention of delegates was established to meet in Philadelphia to frame a constitution for the United States. No more important public matter than this could well be conceived of, and the delegates to this convention were selected with the greatest care. Mr. Dana was appointed from Massachusetts; but, unfortunately, he was unable to accept the appointment, partly by reason of his health and partly because of pressure of his important judicial duties.

When the Constitution had emerged from the convention, it had to be ratified by the several States before it could be in force. Knowing what an almost priceless inheritance the Constitution has proved to be, it seems strange that there was strong opposition in those days to its adoption;

but such is the fact. The first great fight over its adoption arose in Massachusetts. No other considerable State would have adopted it, had it been rejected by Massachusetts, as it was in none of them more popular, and in several of them less so. When the Massachusetts convention met, a majority was opposed to the Constitution; and this opposition was led by no less persons than John Hancock and Samuel Adams, who were supported by Gerry, who had been a delegate to the convention that framed it. Those in favor of the Constitution were led by Mr. Dana, Theophilus Parsons, who afterward succeeded Mr. Dana on his resignation as Chief Justice of the Supreme Bench of Massachusetts, and Mr. Rufus King, who had been a delegate to the Philadelphia convention. This was the turning-point in the history of America. After a long struggle, in which Mr. Dana took a leading part and made many speeches, enough opponents were turned to supporters; and the Constitution was ratified by a small majority. Afterward, as you know, other States followed the example of Massachusetts; and so the United States Constitution was established,—a result, especially considering the closeness of the pivotal contest, in no small measure due to the ability, eloquence, experience, and weight of personal character of Mr. Dana and two or three others in Massachusetts. This was the last of Judge Dana's political services. Three years afterward, in November, 1791, he was appointed Chief Justice of Massachusetts; and during the fifteen years he held that honorable post he took no active part in politics beyond being chosen a Presidential elector in 1792, 1800, and 1808. President John Adams in the first year of his administration found himself involved in great difficulties with the French government. It was the most important foreign question of that time. To settle this, he sent a special embassy to Paris of three envoys; and on this he appointed Mr. Dana with Pinckney and John Marshall. It was a misfortune to the country that Chief Justice Dana, on account of his health, had to decline this appointment. Had he accepted it, he would have stood by Pinckney and

Marshall in the position they took at Paris; and our embassy would have presented to France and to their own country a united front, and would have averted the embarrassments caused by the failure in this respect on the part of Mr. Dana's successor.

Such was the public career of the man for whom this town was named. The section of the country, including what is now the town of Dana, took a strong stand in favor of independence from Great Britain before the Declaration was signed at Philadelphia in 1776; and valuable state papers, taking that view of the situation which, as I have just shown, was Mr. Dana's view, emanated from this neighborhood. This neighborhood also sent many soldiers to the Revolutionary War, some of whom very likely camped at Valley Forge, and saw and appreciated Mr. Dana's services in reorganizing the army; and this neighborhood showed an intelligent interest in the affairs in which Mr. Dana was concerned in the matter of the Conciliatory Bills of Lord North; the missions to France, the raising of money loans in Europe, the mission to Russia, and the adoption of the United States Constitution, which latter had occurred only thirteen years before the incorporation of this town, and it may well be they felt inclined to honor the man whose career was then familiar to them, and who for so many years had been Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of the State. Therefore, it does not seem astonishing that, although the majority of the town was Democratic by three to one at that time, and for many years after, and Mr. Dana was a Federalist, they should yet have named the town after him in 1801, and retained that name ever since.

Francis Dana was not an office-seeker. The office in every case sought him, not he the office; and he declined every position in which he felt his health and other duties would not enable him to fulfil the obligations to the satisfaction of himself and the benefit of his country. When in Russia, he had been officially informed that, if he would but wait a short time longer, he would be received in due form as Minister Plenipotentiary by her Imperial Majesty Empress Cather-

ine; but, feeling that he was needed at home, and that nothing remained in Russia but a formal distinction, which his successor could easily receive, he hurried back to attend to more important duties.

He had a fine sense of honor, which, in these times of indirect influence on legislators, it may be well to illustrate. On the Peace Commission which I have mentioned, sent over by Lord North for the purpose of carrying out the Conciliatory Bills, was Governor Johnstone, who was related by marriage to Mr. Dana, and whom he had formerly met in England. This Governor Johnstone addressed a letter to Mr. Dana, with the hope of influencing him socially and as a relative to favor these measures. In order to be free from even the suspicion in his own mind of being influenced by such a communication, Mr. Dana laid it before Congress, though the letter contained no such obnoxious proposals as did the letter to Mr. Reed, of Pennsylvania, on the same occasion.

In these days of morbid prying into the affairs of all our neighbors and the undue publicity given to the private acts of important persons, it may be well to tell a story of Mr. Dana at Valley Forge. He had come there, as I have stated, as Chairman of the Committee of Congress on the Army for conference with General Washington. One night, as Mr. Dana was sitting in the shadow of the veranda, Washington came out of the headquarters, and walked up and down in deep thought. He did not observe Mr. Dana, who was within hearing distance, and began to talk aloud to himself. The desire for historical information or to aid him to form an opinion as a member of Congress might have furnished excuses for listening; but Mr. Dana immediately came forward, and warned Washington that he was not alone.

After the Revolutionary War there was a popular wave in favor of repudiation of debts, both private and public, especially when due to foreigners or Tories. To those of us who remember how many politicians after our Civil War yielded to the clamor for repudiation in one form or another, and how

few were not weak and vacillating, it may be well to recall that Mr. Dana in those old days threw himself heart and soul in favor of honest payment, and in particular secured by his untiring personal efforts the payment in full of the loans to the government he had been instrumental in securing; and his descendants still have a token sent him in recognition of his successful efforts in this respect.

Now, I trust, I have shown, as I started out to do, that there is something in Mr. Dana's character and achievements, besides a slight assistance in securing the charter, to have caused and to justify the adoption of his name for that of this town; that there is something worthy of remembrance, something fitting to follow or be an inspiration to the inhabitants and their descendants after them.

I should like to end my address on the hundredth anniversary of this typical New England town by a few words on what has long been in my mind in regard to the towns of this Commonwealth. Nowhere else than in the old-fashioned New England town do we see under modern conditions such perfect liberty and equality. As De Tocqueville pointed out, the town meetings furnish a training in self-government such as is to be found nowhere else in the world. They form a nursery for politicians, using that word in its best sense, and educate all the people in the principles of freedom, law, and order. The towns have furnished many of the celebrated clergymen, physicians, and lawyers, whose early training in the town life was never lost, though their future careers may have brought them to the cities. As an offset to the city life, with its excitements and distractions, its feverish energy and nervous overwork, there is the calm satisfaction of the village life with its concrete attainments, with the

“Something accomplished, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.”

As on the farms is produced the foundation of the greater part of our wealth, so the farmers themselves are believed to form the backbone of our country politically.

Just at present our towns are at a temporary disadvantage. Many of the brightest and most active young men go to the cities. The competition of the West in many farm products has lowered what political economists call "the margin of cultivation," so that many farms become unprofitable. There is a loss, too, of some of the home industries caused by their concentration into the large factories. Then, too, in many of the towns we have the summer visitors. Their presence is often a disturbing element. The summer visitor is frequently misunderstood by the farmer, and the farmer not appreciated by the summer visitor. The summer visitor seems to be idling away his time when the farmer is most busy; and some inexperienced and thoughtless visitors fail to distinguish between the ordinary laborer and the farmer, who is a freeholder, of education, thrift, political sagacity, and descended from high-minded, well-educated, religious ancestors, and who form no mere peasantry or yeomanry. The farmer sometimes forgets that the summer visitor is usually a hard worker, dependent upon his brains, living in an age of keen competition and absolutely needing a summer's rest, whose children have been hard at work at school, and whose wife, besides the cares of housekeeping and social duties, has undoubtedly given much time to religious and philanthropic work during the autumn, winter, and spring, and is also in need of recreation. This common misunderstanding is gradually giving place to a better mutual knowledge. The summer visitor begins to stay longer, builds him a house, takes an interest in the town affairs, becomes a voter, seeks the acquaintance and friendship of the old families in the town, and brings new opportunities for the people of the town, contributes to the church and the town library. The telegraph, the telephone, the daily paper, and the rural postal delivery are bringing the city and town closer together. Each as a community and the individuals of each are enriched and helped by common intercourse.

The blessings of liberty and self-government, and the great increase in population and prosperity during the last

one hundred years, have brought new problems, which it is the duty of the next century to solve. Many of the evils from which we suffer are greatest in the great cities; but, fortunately, from the nature of our form of government the towns must take part in the remedial public opinion and legislation needed, and seeing that the new laws, when passed, are enforced. The towns cannot escape the responsibility if they would, and I don't believe they would do it if they could. I am an optimist as to the future of this country, but not because I believe that good luck will carry us through, or because I shut my eyes to the dangers that threaten us, breaking the placid surface of the current here and there like sunken reefs, but because I have a confidence in the high aims, sound sense, moral worth, justice, and ample activity of the American people, in the main and in the long run. The mingling of the towns and cities will do no good of itself unless we make good come out of the increased opportunities. We need, and I believe we shall have more than ever before, the sympathetic thought and the hearty co-operation of the country people.

We have to face the dangers of poverty, overcrowding, and crime in our great cities, the horrors of intemperance, the increased tendency to gambling in high and low life, in pool-rooms and on the stock exchange, corruption in politics, the improper influencing of legislatures, the party "bosses," with their distribution of offices for personal ends and the assessments for the protection of vice, the undue use of money at elections, and the growing power of great aggressions of wealth. We have also the problems of better methods of taxation, of improved public education, of more scientific charity, of the wiser treatment of criminals, of the public health, of securing a more honest and accurate count of votes, the protection of the secrecy of the ballot, of the troubles between capital and labor, of the proper control of public franchises, and many others. To deal wisely with these requires the most thorough study of both human nature and of books, and new inventions besides. The day of crude, ill-considered cures is past. To under-

stand the nature of the evils and their underlying causes, and to suggest the remedies, need as much thorough and intelligent discussion and unity of purpose and action as was demanded in the heroic days before the Revolutionary War, when our Francis Dana was busying himself as I have described; and we shall succeed now as they succeeded then.

We are now, too, having the assistance of the women, who in their clubs are discussing such questions as the abolition of the party boss, by means of taking away his control of salaried officers, by civil service reform.

To give efficient aid, the towns must not only take part in the discussions of these problems, but they must send to the legislature such leading men as both understand these problems and have sound sense and ripe judgment.

In too many towns and cities is it customary to elect legislators as rewards for detail work on party committees, which in no wise fits them for dealing with the great questions of the day, or sometimes in exchange for large contributions from interests seeking legislative favors, distinctly unfitting them for the public trust. I have known towns — but I trust no towns near here have ever done it — which have sent men to the legislature simply because they have made a failure of everything else in life and need the small salary. Legislation is a science that demands not only native fitness and preparation, but long experience. Too many towns change their representatives every year, or, at the very most, every two years. Can't the towns do away with this? They must if they would do any real good. The problems are too serious, too vast to be trifled with. Why not select the most promising men, compel them to accept the nomination, elect them by good majorities, and, when they have proved themselves useful by two or three years' service, are getting on important committees and establishing reputations in the State, back them up and send them for decades in succession, reserving the power to retire them only if they prove unworthy? But don't retire them as they are carving out great policies, just to give some incompetent a chance to try his hand at whittling away at them.

We know we are a big country. Our prosperity and importance are self-confessed; but, for all that, I doubt if we have a sufficient idea of our real greatness of opportunity for the future. We have only too much satisfaction with bigness and its imperfections, expressed by such phrases "Well, I guess that will do" or "What was good enough for our fathers is good enough for me," as if the aspirations of our honored fathers were ever satisfied with the shortcomings about them. Nothing but the best will do,—not only the best things, but the best moral, social, intellectual ideas and institutions.

With the co-operation of the cities and towns in securing the greatest freedom for the development of the good that is always in human nature under good influences, and the removal of such special temptations, degrading environment, and hampering conditions as are the results of man's contrivance, there seem to be no bounds to the real greatness of the people of this country in the future.

May we not reverently foretell of them, somewhat in the words of the old prophet: From the top of the rocks we see them, from the hills we behold them. Who can count the fourth part of them? Surely, there is no enchantment, neither is there any divination against them. The Lord their God is with them, and the shout of kings is among them.

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